

May 19, 1999

Dear Danny,

I would be lying if I said I wasn't somewhat disturbed by our conversation here yesterday.

It pains and hurts me to see you *so* depressed. The hardest part is that I understand completely and pretty much was in the same state of mind you appear to be in now earlier this year, and if I'm not careful, could find myself in that state of mind again. But it scares me to hear you talk of suicide and *again* I understand! That very subject was pretty much the only thing on my mind in December, January and February, when I couldn't get a job, couldn't get temp work and couldn't even land a gig, and felt totally like shit besides even though all the medical tests (I have to take) said otherwise. So right out front, I am not going to be the one to paint some false rosy picture and say all is well and wonderful because I know all too well that life--well maybe not life, but the world and society we live in sucks. Period.

Now that that's out of the way, I know you're deeply concerned about Mike, and feel terrible for Lynn, but (and I know you know this) the person you have to be most concerned about now is you. You can't take care of others until you take care of yourself and you have to do that first. I'm not gonna be the one to lay words like attitude on you (by the way one of my favorite Kinks songs), but you have to start believing in yourself. Yeah, I know that sounds like bullshit and I'm sure you've heard it before. But if there's one thing I know about you in the 12 or whatever years we've known each other, it's that you're a lot smarter and have much more on the ball than you think you do. Much more. I'm not kidding, but you are one of the most perceptive people I've ever met, and you have to start believing and realizing that.

I know you were brought up to feel or think you're some kind of worthless bum or something who'll never achieve what you want or amount to any good, but that could not be farther from the truth. To me, you're a smart, extremely creative, intelligent and sensitive person who cares about his friends probably more than he cares about himself, and I absolutely believe that. I assure you with everything in me that if I didn't believe that I wouldn't have encouraged you to start playing and writing again when you joined the Fumblers or asked you to write for the Welcomat once I was in a position to get you published. At the same time you're one stubborn son of a bitch (and I'm saying that with love and caring) and to me you're biggest problem is you let your stubbornness get the best of you, and it keeps you down and holds you back.

But I also know that conquering this kind of stuff is not easy. It's extremely hard, difficult and frustrating. And when you're taken over by depression, which to me is a living breathing thing, it's even worse because depression is a vast, dark hole and too often there doesn't seem to be a way out or a light, and so you just go deeper and deeper into that hole, and the deeper you go, the darker it gets. But sometimes the light may be the flicker of a candle or the briefest glow of a match, and if you're not looking, you can miss it.

But this much I know. Smack will only take you deeper into the hole and suicide is just an end, and yes I understand the desire to put an end to the

hideous emotional turmoil we go through every day. And I know all about that turmoil, how relentless it can be, and that there is no easy answer.

In my case, I'm on the outside period and there ain't no way I'm ever gonna fit into this society, and at this point I don't even want to. Didn't like it, never did, for as long as I can remember. All the so-called goals, all the other shit you're supposed to want and have always seemed to me to be complete crap and I just never bought it. And it's not that I don't want a nice house or to be in love and most of all to not have to worry, 'cause I do want those things. But what I don't want is the crap you have to go through to get them. The couple of times in the past year I had to go to temp jobs or stuff and drive on I-95 or the expressway in rush hour I couldn't believe it. It was terrifying and insane, and no wonder people are the way they are doing that shit every day. It's a miracle that there aren't more people with guns on rooftops killing everyone after going through that shit every day.

And also in my case, being gay doesn't make it any easier. The big taboo. The one thing you're not supposed to be. And it's not like I asked for or wanted it. It's just something that is that I had nothing to do with or maybe I did, I don't know. What it is is something I had (have) to just accept, and it ain't easy 'cause I always fall in love with the wrong people. And then having this disease on top of that, and now being in the position of not being able to necessarily move where I want or accept a job I might want because if the system isn't in place to pay for these medicines (that cost somewhere around \$12,000 a year) I'm fucked. Like even if I wanted to, I couldn't say live in England for a while because I need this medicine, and believe me no foreign government is gonna take in someone that they have to provide \$12,000 in medicine for. So this is just to let you know you're not the only one running smack into walls. I know all about walls. It would all probably be easier if I fit into whatever the gay world is, but I don't fit there either. Once I decided to start trying to accept who I am instead of fighting it (which by the way is a never-ending process) I also had to realize that I still had to be me, and that being me is not being some flaming faggot, which hasn't made it easier. Probably the truest line I ever put in a song is "I am caught between two worlds/neither one feels like home." So I don't know if I'll ever feel totally comfortable in this life. But the older I get, the less I care what other people think, and if I end up being some weird old eccentric which I probably already am, what the fuck.

Believe me, I'm not telling you all this to pull rank in depression or something, as "if you think you're depressed, dig this," but just to let you know that I understand about walls and darkness and about being alone. But I know that hurting yourself ain't the answer, no matter what the temptation. Don't forget Dylan's line: "I fought with my twin/That enemy within." I fight with my twin every day, not only every day, but it seems like every second of every day, and I'm pretty sure you do the same.

I'm really not sure what I'm trying to say here, but I hope you get the idea. So the next time you feel like driving into Camden to score smack or whatever, I want you know you can ALWAYS call me instead, no matter what time of day or night or what I might be doing. You mean much more than a lot to me. At this point, you're probably my best friend whatever that is, and yes I do love

you. As Mike once said after you joined the band, “Never saw Pete laugh so much.” As you know, in this life, it’s friends that count, not the other shit. It’s really all we have.

So as hard as it is, start trying to drive the self-destructive shit out of your brain AND I KNOW IT’S DIFFICULT! Because that other shit, it envelopes you and it makes you want it (and I’m not talking about drugs but self-destruction) and if there is a devil, it’s that, and it *is* inviting for whatever fucked-up reason. So instead, just start taking steps even if they’re small ones (keeping in mind that it’s one step forward, two steps back) and send Ben your fucking songs (I *know* he thinks the world of you ‘cause he’s told me).

And don’t fucking kill yourself man, because... well ***I need you*** and not just ‘cause you’re one of the few people who can make laugh, but because you’re you, and that “you” is very important to this person and if I’m not mistaken quite a few other people as well.